



U.S. Senator Judd Gregg, Chairman

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, April 1, 2003

Contact: Christine Iverson
(202) 224-6770

HELP COMMITTEE TO HOLD HEARING ON MYSTERY RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

Washington, DC—Chairman Judd Gregg (R-New Hampshire) and the Senate committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions will hold a hearing on the mysterious respiratory disease affecting Asia, including Vietnam, China, and Hong Kong and now spreading to other parts of the globe, including the United States.

Severe acute respiratory syndrome or SARS, has infected as many as 1,800 people, resulting in at least 60 deaths. The mysterious disease first appeared in a man admitted to a hospital in Hanoi. Since then, the disease has spread through Asia, to Europe and to the United States. There are currently at least 69 confirmed cases in this country and 53 in Canada. Most of the cases remain in China, where 806 people have been affected, and Hong Kong where 685 people have the diseases.

At this time, health experts do not know exactly how the disease is spread or how to cure it.

“This hearing will focus on the potential wide ranging impact of this disease. We will also look at the progress health experts have made in determining how the disease is spread and how to prepare health care systems in the United States to prepare for and fight against this growing threat,” Senator Judd Gregg said.

The hearing is currently scheduled for Wednesday, April 9, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. in 430 Dirksen. A witness list and other information will be released as it becomes available.

###